

School Forum 27th June 2019 Elective Home Education

Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress made with Elective Home Education as part of the recovery plan.

Schools Forum made provision for a full time equivalent post to supplement the work of the Elective Home Education Officer. This work is focused on lowering the number of children who are home educated in Torbay to address the concerns about:

Working with parents and partner agencies to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements for this cohort.

To ensure that the education for this group is suitable.

To benefit the wider education system in Torbay by drawing down the funding associated with children returning to mainstream education.

The Initial Position

In September 2018 there were 208 children (approximately) registered with the local authority as being educated at home. The figure is approximate as multiple recording systems had been in use. These were rationalised to create a baseline.

New registrations were followed up but review of existing education was hampered by the number of students leaving mainstream schooling. At its peak this was 4 children a week with the service's entire capacity absorbed into working with these families, leaving no capacity to look at pupils already educated at home.

Enhanced Service

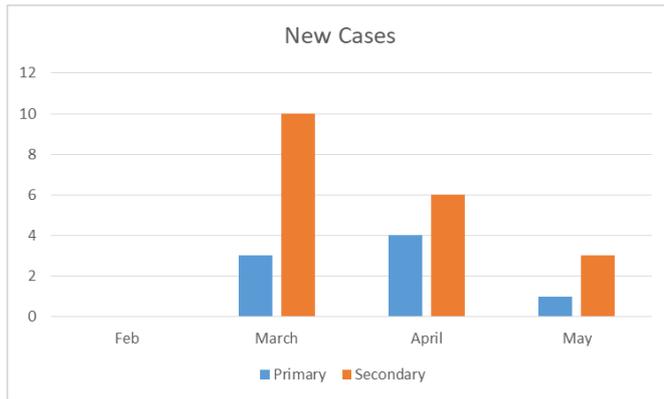
The School Forum investment alongside Council revenue funds has enabled the Vulnerable Students Team to re-structure to better meet need. Business support has allowed the creation of monthly dashboards and the centralised administration of case notes and appointments.

The existing EHE Officer has temporarily increased from 0.6FTE to Full Time and a 0.6 FTE EHE Officer has been appointed for 12 months. Their work is also being supported by a Business Support Apprentice

2019 Data

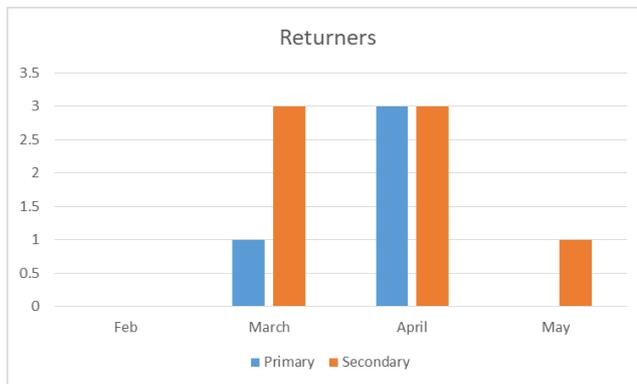
The number of new cases is falling month by month as the team is able to make timely visits and discuss options with families.

At the same time schools have increasingly engaged with the team to identify families who need to have their responsibilities under home education explained before making any decision



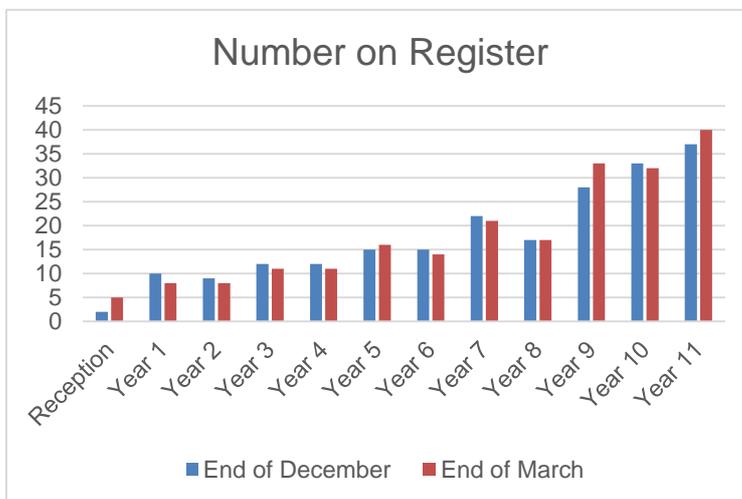
There is still work to be done with individual schools. There is a concern around one secondary who have 19 students choosing EHE in two terms against a sector average of 4 this will be picked up through the LA/Trust conversations.

At the same time as the number of new cases is declining, the numbers returning to mainstream education are remaining constant giving a reduction in overall numbers.



The numbers on the register have fallen in all years except at transition boundaries with the largest increase being at Year 9.

This may be for a range of reasons around Key Stage transition. For Year 9 this includes an element of students who leave mainstream schooling as they are moving to South Devon High School for Year 10 and do not wish to start Key Stage 4 courses in a school they will be leaving.



Action needs to be taken to ensure there is no loss of provision

When Year 11 leave the register the total will be 176 students at current numbers. This is against a peak of 242 in July 2018.

Future Work

The next priorities for the team are:

1. Maintain the focus on meeting new cases within 2 weeks and ideally 1 week.
2. Work with 'stuck' cases to move them forward and back into mainstream where the education is deemed unsuitable.
3. Work with SEND colleagues to ensure that children with EHCPs are having their identified needs met.
4. Ensure that all existing cases have an annual review with parents. This work has already started a conversation about two children returning to mainstream provision.

Dan Hamer
Head of Vulnerable Pupils